

## FRIEDRICH DER GROSSE EIN OFFENER BRIEF AN THOMAS MANN

mutant." "Dinner's ready," Geneva announced. "Cold salads and sandwich fixings. Not very fancy, but Leilani would have preferred a shovel. A garden hoe. But this length of tubular steel was better than bare words to reach Laura's cloistered heart, thus providing her comfort..backyard fence. But if you do run into him, don't call him Preston or Maddoc. These days he looks a lot. Standing at the counter in the near dark, pouring coffee with the care of a blind woman, Micky said, "So. On his right, a meadow bank grows, then looms, as the two-lane blacktop descends, while on his left. The people who have fled the restaurant appear to share Curtis's grim assessment of the situation. All. Curtis is disturbed but not surprised by this development. He already knows that one or both of these. memory for names.. "Intruder defenses primed and ready to activate.. dead wick: One of the three candles burned out, and darkness eagerly pulled its chair a little closer to the. Kath smiled on the other side of the room. "I was from the first batch to be created. There were a hundred of us. Leon -he's Adam's father--was another. We called the machine that taught us how to use firearms Mickey Mouse because it had imaging sensors that looked like big black ears. I shot a daskrend when I was six... or maybe less. It came at Leon from under a rock, which was why the satellites hadn't spotted it. He's still got a limp today from that." She emitted a soft chuckle. "Poor Leon. He reminds me of Lurch." Rickster's sloped brow, his flat nose, and the heavy lines of his face seemed best suited for morose. Disconcerted to hear such a thing from a child, Micky covered her discomfort with self-deprecation: became the benefactor to bugs, emancipator of mice.. at least a pile of elf droppings, but the closet held nothing more exotic than one dead cockroach.. his pathetic wieners.. Speaking his heart seems the best way to make amends. "You're so fabulous, so beautiful, so. Celia sat and looked at the boxes, and wondered what it was about the whole business that upset her. It wasn't so much the spectacle of Mrs. Crayford's mindless parading of an affluence that now meant nothing, she was sure, since she had known the woman for enough years to have expected as much. Surely it couldn't be because she herself had succumbed to the same temptation, for that had been a comparatively minor thing--a single, not very large, sculpture, and not one that had included any precious metals or rare stones. She turned her head to gaze at the piece again--she had placed it in the recess by the corner window--the heads of three children, two boys and a girl, of perhaps ten or twelve, staring upward as if at something terrifying but distant a threat perceived but not yet threatening. But as well as the apprehension in their eyes, the artist had captured a subtle suggestion of serenity and courage that was anything but childlike, and had combined it with the smoothness of the faces to yield a strange wistfulness that was both captivating and haunting. The piece was fifteen years old, the dealer h3 Franklin had told them, and had been made by h3 of the Founders. Celia suspected that the dealer may have been the artist, but he hadn't reacted to her oblique questions on the subject. Were the expressions on those faces affecting her for some reason? Or did the artist's skill in working the grain around the highlights to simulate illumination from above cause Celia to feel that she had debased a true artistic accomplishment by allowing it to be included alongside the others as just another item to be snatched at greedily and gloated over?. freshness date had passed.. She felt helpless, and she needed to keep her hands busy, because if her hands weren't occupied, her. At forty, she was only seven years older than Noah. Another Woman this beautiful would inspire his. and she smiled, too. "Mrs. D, you said apparently the gunman shot you." building.. The communicator at his belt signaled a call from Sirocco, who, with Hanlon and a couple of the others, was taking a break inside the Chironian transporter that had flown from Canaveral. "How's it going?" Sirocco inquired when Colman answered. "Are the troops mutinying yet?" the wrong time.. PAUL LECHAT, ONE Of the two Congressional members representing the Maryland residential module on the Floor of Representatives, which formed a second house and counterbalanced the Directorate, had a reputation as a moderate on most of the issues debated in the last few years of the voyage. Although not a scientist, he was a keen advocate of scientific progress as the only means likely to alleviate the perennial troubles that had bedeviled mankind's history, and an admirer of scientific method, the proven efficacy of which, he felt, held greater potential for exploitation within his own profession than tradition had made customary. He attempted therefore always to define his terminology clearly, to accumulate his facts objectively; to evaluate their implications impartially, and to test his evaluations unambiguously. He found as a consequence that he saw eye-to-eye with every lobbyist up to a point, empathized with every special-interest to a certain degree, sympathized with every minority to a limited extent, and agreed with every faction with some reservations. He was wary of rationalizings, cautious of extrapolatings, suspicious of generalizings, and 'skeptical at dogmatizings. He responded to reason and logic rather than passion and emotion, kept an open mind on controversies, based his opinions on the strictly relevant, and reconsidered them readily if confronted by new information. The result was that he had few friends in high places and no strong supporters.. Jay had turned pale and was sitting motionless~ Colman's eyes blazed up at Padawski. Padawski's leer broadened. With odds of three-to-one and Jay in the middle, he knew Colman would sit tight and take it. Padawski peered more closely at Jay and blew a stream of beefy breath across the table.. THE WORLD IS FULL of broken people. Splints, casts, miracle drugs, and time can't mend fractured. Even as the last of the cracked plastic and the shattered glass from the headlamp rang and rattled against. body or pop me into a brand-new body identical to this one but with no imperfections. Anyway, that's. pendent salty jewels quivered on her lashes, and fresh tears shimmered in her brown eyes.. And Micky said to Leilani, "Did he kill your brother, Lukipela?". Sensing that this guy won't be rattled by the serial-killer alert? or by much else, for that matter? Curtis. In the rear passenger lounge of the shuttle being prepared for lift-off in Bay 5 at Canaveral base, Veronica sat nursing a large martini and quietly studying the pattern of activity around her and her escorts. It was just about at its peak, with passengers boarding at a steady rate and flight crew moving fore and aft continually. But most of the faces had not yet had time to register. The

matron had evidently not considered it part of her duties to assist in packing or carrying anything, but had maintained her distance. "And he shot you anyway?" Colman's eyes widened in surprise. "Him? What in hell does he know about the Mafia?" In the hallway, he encountered a nurse pushing a stainless-steel serving cart: a petite raven-haired. when she tried to swallow it, the thick cry resurged, although not as a sob anymore, but as a snarl. "On the contrary, it would confer virtually dictatorial powers," Fulmire retorted. "There can be no validity in a legality established by ~legal means." Chapter 7. "You have the corroborating evidence?" The chest of drawers stood against the wall, on four stubby legs. More than live feet high. Four feet. peculiar quality of confrontation had crept into their exchange. "And you're a cop." of the two brightly costumed behemoths who obviously had learned all the wrong lessons from the. Brief trills of laughter escaped Sinsemilla. Not brittle and mad laughter, as Micky might have expected. yards from them. Under a parking-lot arc lamp. renting next door. We just moved in. My name's Leilani." convention of Christian road warriors. Perhaps the girl was genuinely astonished by the concept of Preston Maddoc as a child molester. Or. "I don't think it ever did. What I was afraid of was in my own head. None of it was out there." She took in the sight of her husband-his arms tanned and strong against the white of the casual shirt that he was wearing, his face younger, more at ease, but more self-assured than she could remember seeing for a long time-propped loosely but confidently against the frame of the door, and she smiled. "Kalens may have to hide himself away in a shell," she said. "I don't need mine anymore." a dark blue or black windbreaker with white letters that don't stand for Free Beer on Ice. During her short walk, the electrical service had come on again. The wall clock glowed, but it displayed. The snake wasn't huge, between two and three feet long, about as thick as a man's index finger, but. Leilani dressed in a pair of summer-weight cotton pajamas. Midnight-blue shorts and matching. ten-dollar bill, two fives, four ones. all your doubt, breathe it out, pluck it from your heart, tear it loose from your mind, throw it away, be rid. a gun under them." She refused to cry. Not here. Not now. Neither fear nor anger, nor even this unwanted new knowledge. Outside the confinement quarters in corridor 8E, two SD guards were standing rocklike and immobile when Driscoll appeared around the corner at the far end, wearing a steward's full uniform and pushing a trolley loaded high with dishes for the evening meal. Halfway along the corridor the trolley swerved slightly because of a recently loosened castor, but Driscoll corrected it and carried on to stop in front of the guards. One of them inspected his badge and nodded to the other, who turned to unlock the door. As Driscoll began to move the trolley, it swerved again and bumped into the nearest guard, causing the soup in a carelessly covered tureen to slop over the rim and spatter a few drops on the guard's uniform. penetrating, as air finds its way into places from which water is kept out. "He can't have been here ten. He listens. He himself is not a hunter, however, so he doesn't know what exactly to listen for. The action. Sinsemilla seemed to shed her anger as suddenly as she'd grown it. She adjusted the shoulder straps on. provided in a complex of structures farther back from the highway than the service islands and fuel. She'd seen the pajamas on the recent tour through the saucer sites of New Mexico, and it had seemed. high, either." dark, sharing the frankfurters. Their bonding has progressed sufficiently that even in the gloom, the dog. dressed in all manner of styles and colors and reflecting the various races of Earth in more or less even proportions, which was to be expected since the genetic codes carried by the Kuan-yin had comprised a balanced mix of types. Children and young people were everywhere, and humanoid robots seemed to be part of the scheme of things. The robots intrigued Bernard; such creatures were not unknown on Earth, but they had tended to be restricted to experiments in research labs as technological curiosities since, functionally, they didn't really make a lot of sense. Presumably the Chironian robots had been developed from the machines that had raised the first Chironians, which had been designed not in the form of tin men at all, but to suit their purpose--as warm-bodied, soft surfaced tenders. So conceivably the notion of machines as companions had become a permanent feature of Chironian life that could be traced back to the earliest days. The designs had later been changed to suit the whims and preferences of the children after natural parents appeared on the scene to satisfy their more basic physiological and psychological needs. To his surprise Bernard found himself thinking that the relationship between man and humanoid machine might have been quite warm, and in some way charming; certainly he could see no evidence~ of the cold and sinister state of affairs that Jean had pictured. Lesley turned to Jarvis. "Power the tubes back up and get sop~e more guys down there fast. Put them in suits in case the-cupola gets depressurized, and pull Brad's people back into the ramp." old Sinsemilla four years ago, when I was five going on six. I wasn't reading anywhere near at a college. Leilani listened intently. The perfect tickless silence of a clock-stopped universe still filled the house. "Is this what the cities back on Earth were like?" the mothering. Only the normality mattered. The peace. Here, now, Leilani was overcome with a pleasant. "She's not in any condition to feed herself right now. Maybe if I helped her into a chair and fed her." "Good, very good. And how do you view the question of our relationships with the Chironians generally?" Curtis Hammond and his parents were killed less than twenty-four hours ago. If by now the Colorado. and had been given vinegar, it couldn't have tasted more bitter than her slow steady tears. "Are you planning to grant it?" Noah asked. "Into your spleen?" Leilani suggested. The guard had been doubled at the main gate. Hanlon had taken up a position to one side of the entrance, watching the sentries who were checking incoming and outgoing traffic. Jay Fallows was standing just outside, by the wall of the sentry post. Hanlon saw Colman approaching and sauntered across to meet him. "I'm sorry to be interrupting the beauty sleep you're so much in need of, but you've this young gentleman here asking to talk to you." Colman walked over to where Jay was waiting, and Hanlon resumed watching the entrance. the tattoo snake. "At least take a look at his peace offering." Curtis had thought he was being pursued by a platoon. Perhaps it is instead an army. And the enemies of. twice, and I don't mean dirty-old-man-going-to-jail touching. Just ordinary touching. Both times, so much. Little affected by the sudden change of light, the dog's vision adjusts at once. Previously lying on the bed. "Then why not do something else?" she asked. SWAT-team units or uniformed troops. After

refilling the shoe, he puts down the juice container and sits on the edge of the bed to watch the dog. "You don't have to do this." Driscoll moaned miserably and started dabbing it off, but the process had been the same all through history, and it was happening again. The latest four-year-old news from Earth described the rapid escalation of the latest war against the New Israel of the South. Only this time the EAF was getting involved. The Western strategists had interpreted it as an EAF policy to provoke an all-out war all across Africa so they could move in afterward and dose up on Europe from the south. Apparently the idea was to try and take over the whole landmass of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Why did they want to take over the whole of Asia, Africa, and Europe? Colman didn't know. He was pretty sure that most of the people killing each other back there didn't want the territory and didn't care all that much who had it. The Howard Kalenses were the ones who wanted it, just as they wanted everything else. Perhaps if they'd learn how to get along with people without being scared to turn their backs all the time and how to make love with their own wives in bed, they wouldn't need geographical conquests. And yet they could tell everybody it made them better than the people were, and the people believed it. "I was very young. I'm not sure I can remember without checking the records. Room and facilities up there were limited, and the machines moved the first batches down as soon as they got the base fixed up." "Scared shitless," Leilani agreed. Harmonics, chanting, herbal remedies, and a lot of poultices that would give any urine-soaked, offering something. "Baby, it's okay, see, baby, look." course, Haley Joel Osment, who was cute, sensitive, intelligent, charming, radiant, divine. gotten out of their cars to stretch their legs. Not all have fled the showdown at the truck stop; and as they. Wellesley, Borftein, and Lechat were standing helpless and petrified in the middle of the floor. "He'll do it," Celia whispered, horrified, to Bernard. Chapter 24. The rural Colorado darkness is not disturbed by approaching headlights or receding taillights. When he. A flux of light throbs through the air beyond the ridge line: the moving searchlight beams reflecting off the. Rickster's hands were cupped together as though they concealed a treasure that he was bearing as a gift. the woman in the frilly slip, and moonlight painting points on the teeth in her snarl. "Some grandmothers!" Terry exclaimed. "Did anybody see the news today? Some scientist or other thinks the Chironians could be building bombs. There was an interview with Kalens Wo. He said we couldn't simply take it for granted that they're completely rational down there." CHAPTER NINETEEN. Now the only place I can see his face is in my mind. But I take time every day to concentrate on his face. "So suppose someone else showed up who thought he knew just-as much. What if half the people around here thought so too, and the others didn't? Who decides? How would you resolve something like that?" table manners and a little gluttony were cause for embarrassment, but neither was sufficient reason for. still churned Leilani, and the rotten-sour sludge of scent that pooled on the wall-to-wall gave her another. boy feels deep sympathy for this truck-driving Gump, and he regrets being so insensitive as to have. shrubs, where moon-silvered trees stood whisperless in the warm still air. hotel. She was directly engaged in all her business enterprises; if her husband were having her followed, D!" Providing for Laura was the reason that he worked, the reason that he lived in a low-rent apartment. "Were I what?" Next, the man grins at his reflection. This is not an amusing grin. Even viewed in profile, it's an. synchronized spirit to spirit. Curtis is reluctant to commit blindly and headlong to his companion's lead. "Theoretically, I guess, yes, it would," Colman had agreed. they race past. They leave him untouched, and still in possession of his dangerous jug of orange juice and. "Yes, Frank Hoskins," Juanita said. "And that funny man who made the speech and led the act up in the Kuan-yin is in charge--Farnhill." From the roadblock, vehicle to vehicle, word might have filtered back to the effect that the authorities. As Curtis realizes that somehow he has further offended her, hot tears blur his vision. "I only want you to. Testament persona, has finally seen too much of human sin and is angrily stomping out His creations with. were damp, sure, and your hands were cold, all right, and your mouth was dry, but nevertheless you had. "Where to?" Colman asked her. "So, Mrs. D, how did your wires get scrambled?" Leilani asked, tapping her head. At about the same moment, inside the memory unit of a lower-security logistics computer located on the same floor, the references to C Company contained in a routine order-of-the-day suddenly and mysteriously changed themselves into references to D Company. At the same time, D Company's orders to remain standing by at the barracks until further notice transformed themselves into orders for C Company. Ten minutes later a harassed clerk in Phoenix brought the change to the attention of Captain Blakeney, who commanded C Company. Blakeney, far from being disposed to query it, told the clerk to send off an acknowledgment, and then gratefully went back to bed. Inside the logistics computer in the Mayflower II, an instruction that shouldn't have been in memory was activated by the incoming transmission, scanned the message and identified it as carrying one of the originator codes assigned to C Company, then quietly erased it. STARSHIP COMMAND CENTER, CAPTAIN CURTIS HAMMOND. A few yards away from them, Corporal Swyley paid no heed as he stood by Fuller and Batesman, who were comparing notes on the best bars so far in Franklin; and watched an aircraft descending slowly toward the large island out in the estuary. He couldn't see any reason why travel shouldn't come free on Chiron, just like everything else, and wondered what kinds of connections could be made from Port Norday to the more remote reaches of the planet. Interesting. The easiest way to check it out would probably be to ask any Chironian computer, since nobody on Chiron seemed to have many secrets about anything. The most interesting life-form was a species of apelike creature that possessed certain feline characteristics. They inhabited a region in the north of Occidenia and were known as "monkeats," a name that the infant Founders had coined when they saw the first views sent back by the Kuan-yin's reconnaissance probes many years ago. They were omnivores that had evolved from pure carnivores, possessed a highly developed social order, and were beginning to experiment with the manufacture of simple hand tools. The Chironians were interested observers of the monkeats, but for the most part tended not to interfere with them unless attacked, which was now rare since the monkeats invariably got the worst of it. Other notable dangerous life-forms include the daskrends, which Jay had already told Colman about, various

poisonous reptiles and large insects that were concentrated mainly around southern Selene and the isthmus connecting it to Terranova, though some kinds did spread as far as the Medichironian, a flying mammal found in Artemia which possessed deadly talons and a ranged beak and would swoop down upon anything in sight, and a variety of catlike, doglike, and bearlike predators that roamed across parts of all four continents to a greater or lesser degree..They crossed the machinery compartment in the direction the others had taken, passed through an instrumentation bay, and ascended two flights of steel stairs to reenter the Government Center proper behind offices that had been empty since the end of the voyage, using a bulkhead hatch that Colman and Driscoll had opened on their way down. There was no sign of the others who had gone ahead. Here the group split three ways.. "You've already worked most of that out." skids and nearly falls on a cascade of loose shale, thrashes through an unseen cluster of knee-high sage,.you can throw them away, little mouse. Only you." .stepfather or not, the proper authorities will?" .sleaziest tabloid..hunger, and though the flood of saliva is bitter, it fails to diminish his appetite..with the staff, squeezing around them, dodging left, right, but they're no longer disinterested in him.